



Utah Department of Agriculture

Commissioner: Leonard M. Blackham

Divisions: Administrative Services
Animal Industry
Conservation and Resource Management
Grazing Improvement Program
Laboratory and Chemistry Services
Marketing and Development
Plant Industry
Regulatory Services



Full Time Employees: 226

Contact Information: <http://www.ag.utah.gov>
(801) 538-7100

Mission Statement: To protect and promote Utah agriculture and food.

Emerging Issues and Strategic Focus:

Our present and future farmers and ranchers face many challenges as they work to remain on the land, including growth, fluctuating markets and prices, limited water supplies, drought, fire, frost, pests, etc. Our efforts help both policy makers and the public recognize that our farmers and ranchers manage land and water resources on both private and public lands that are critical not only to the production of food and fiber in Utah, but also to air quality, water quality and quantity, wildlife habitat, and watershed and riparian health. Our policies and programs need to reflect the interdependence of our quality of life with healthy natural systems and robust agricultural communities.

Our agency seeks to provide a delicate balance between our responsibilities in protecting public health and ensuring a viable regulated industry. The regulatory programs and approach need to provide a means whereby we meet both of these sometimes competing interests.

Recent instances of contaminated foods, both foreign and domestically produced, are increasing consumer concerns over food safety. With limited federal inspection of imported foods, state food inspections will play a more significant role in consumer protection. We can anticipate the need for increased follow-up inspections of national product recalls as well as an increase in food safety inspections of Utah facilities.

The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food is developing plans and strategies to fulfill its important mission and contribute to Utah's prosperity and the Governor's priorities.



Economic Development:

- Support Utah agriculture producers in expanding markets for their products through Utah's Own and other initiatives
- Pursue "Ag to Energy" opportunities for better use of Utah agricultural products
- Improve the health and productivity of Utah rangeland to increase rancher profitability
- Support the Agriculture Resource Development Loan (ARDL) and Rural Rehabilitation Loan programs as a means of conserving and protecting our natural resources and maintaining viable agricultural operations



Quality of Life:

- Restore the health and productivity of the land and reduce impacts and risks from catastrophic fire and invasive species
- Promote best management practices in farming and ranching to improve air and water quality, and enhance recreational and social benefits
- Protect public health by ensuring safe food products from farm to table



Education:

- Increase public awareness of where food comes from and the relevance of Utah's farms and ranches to a healthy environment and quality of life
- Expand and market "Utah's Own" program to promote awareness and consumption of Utah-produced agricultural products
- Assist in building the next generation of farm and ranch leaders



Governance:

- Develop and implement plans to co-locate with other state and federal agencies
- Strengthen alliances with Utah Partners for Conservation and Development (UPCD), Utah State University Extension, non-governmental organizations, industry, and the general public to expand capacity and improve effectiveness